



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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Contact: Craig Ryan
1-866-305-2136

**Stamas, Elsenheimer announce legislation for future of
Georgia-Pacific employees, property**
Legislators to make worker training funds available

LANSING – State Sen. Tony Stamas, Rep. Kevin Elsenheimer and Sen. Jason Allen today unveiled a plan to help build a solid economic future for the Gaylord area, which was recently hit with news that a major employer was closing its doors.

Georgia-Pacific announced Monday it was permanently closing the doors to its Gaylord particleboard facility, leaving 210 workers without employment.

“Monday’s news was unexpected and devastating to the families whose lives depended on those jobs,” said Stamas, R-Midland. “One of the main questions we’ve heard from the community is ‘What are we going to do next?’ As state leaders, we are here to offer some initial direction for the future as the entire community grapples with the loss of the Georgia-Pacific facility, and we will continue to pursue additional options and ideas as they develop.”

The plan includes four initial efforts to address the plant closure and job loss.

First, a measure is being introduced to provide job retraining funds for the Kirtland Community College M-TEC Center to upgrade job skills for displaced workers.

The remaining bills will focus on making the property more attractive to other job providers.

This will be accomplished by designating the Georgia-Pacific property a tax-free renaissance zone and improving transportation needs in the area through two efforts – continuing to fight for state funding for construction of the Milbocker-McCoy/I-75 overpass and allowing the Transportation Economic Development Fund to grant funding for railroad line expansion.

“The impact of Gaylord losing 210 jobs is comparable to about 10,000 people being laid off all at once in Oakland County,” said Elsenheimer, R-Bellaire. “This is a big hit to the residents and workers of Gaylord. We are already working on legislation tailored to Gaylord, to help attract developers and create new jobs.”

Georgia-Pacific is North America’s leading producer of composite panels and has operated the plant in Gaylord since purchasing it in 1987.

The Gaylord facility produced particleboard used for office furniture and floor decking for manufactured housing.

(more)

“Senator Stamas and Representative Elsenheimer have been working tirelessly on how to address the closing of the Georgia-Pacific facility,” said Allen, R-Traverse City. “They have been very active in looking for solutions to the challenges facing the Gaylord community. I am committed to helping them do whatever we can to help the community and the families who were affected by this closing.”

Stamas and Elsenheimer will host a town hall meeting March 20 on the plant closing for community members to share their thoughts and concerns. They will be joined by Allen, chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor, as well as Rep. Bill Huizenga, chair of the House Commerce Committee.

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